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Naiad

By DONALD DAVIDSON

Nothing could dull that magic whispering,
Imperious on the river's copper slant,
Or hide from her the vague forms flickering
In the haunted depths, darting and vigilant.

Bathers ashore were cultivating a tan;
The fat and the lean were gauded cap-a-pie.
She thought that jerseys were not Arethusean,
And a gartered limb to her was monstrosity.

It irked that soggy wool kept flesh from water.
What gentle hand kept plucking at her waist?
She floated, lithe, apart, till the slow wash brought her
To a hidden marge where sand-spits interlaced.

Dripping, she stood, and madness stung her blood,
And warm desire unsheathed her tender breasts.
All ancient beauty sang upon the flood,
And she made her beauty naked at those behests.

The skittering dragon-flies beheld her lust,
And her plunging whiteness deep in the green deflected.
The penumbral depths received her slim trunk's thrust,
Like lover gesturing "Come, oh Long-expected!"

The years fled back, and there was time no more;
Her floating hair looped in a dark coronal.
She gazed upon the heaven's infinite floor
Till the world receded, and left the waters thronal.

A warm hand glided across her passionate breast;
A seeking arm lifted her in the abyss.
She saw the urgent eyes, the God's hair cressed
With flowering slips, and yielded to his kiss.

The fat and the lean beset the dark with light,
And searching voices flittered to and fro.
A rustic, stumbling in a sandy bight,
Gloated upon the dead with obscene woe.

Ninotchka

From the Russian of Averchenko

By JEAN CUTNER

OLD Mr. Mishkin summoned his stenographer, Ninotchka, into his office and, handing her some notes, said, "Take care of these, please."

While he spoke, he looked at her attentively. She was a plump young girl of middle height, with a well developed bust. Her beautiful white face was calm and her eyes sparkled with a blue light.

Mr. Mishkin moved nearer to her. "So you'll copy this.... It isn't too much trouble?"

"But that is what I am here for...." She was surprised. "That is what I get paid for!"

"Oh, to be sure, to be sure.... By the way, doesn't bending over your typewriter make your chest ache? It would be sad to have that beautiful chest ache...."

Briefly, "It does not ache."

"I am very glad. You are not cold?"

"Why should I be cold?"

"But your waist is so thin.... transparent... Your arms shine through... Beautiful arms. Are your muscles strong?"

"Leave my arms alone, please."

"Oh, my dear.... One minute.... Wait, why do you push me? I want to fix that...."

"Let go my arm. It hurts. How dare you?... Scoundrel!"

Ninotchka tore herself out of the trembling hands of old Mishkin and ran out of the room. Her hair was awry and her right arm sharply pained above the elbow.

"The brute...." she whispered. "I won't let him off so easily." And, seizing her wraps, she ran out of the building and said to herself, "Who shall I go to? Oh, I'll go to a lawyer."

Lawyer Wordy received her immediately, and attentively listened to her.

"What a scoundrel.... And an old man at that! What shall I do to him?" he asked ingratiatingly.

"Can't you send him to Siberia?" Ninotchka asked.

"That is impossible, but I can summon him to answer for this."

"Summon him, then."

"Have you any witnesses?"

"I am the witness," she said.

"You are the complainant. But if there have been no witnesses, perhaps you possess evidence of violence?"

"I should say so. There's a black and blue mark on my arm."

Wordy thoughtfully regarded Ninotchka's figure, her red lips and rosy cheeks down one of which a little tear rolled. "Let me see that arm," said the lawyer.

"It is under the sleeve, here."

"You'll have to take the waist off."

"But you are not a doctor," Ninotchka protested.

"That is of little consequence. The functions of doctor and lawyer are so similar that they are frequently interchangeable. Do you know what an alibi is?"

"I don't know."

"Well, that is what it is. In order to establish the existence of the offence, I

must first verify your statement. Take off your waist."

Red in the face, Ninochka began clumsily to fumble with the hooks. The lawyer helped her. When he saw her nude rosy arm with a dimple in the elbow, he touched the ailing red spot on the shoulder and said courteously:

"I beg pardon, I must examine this. Lift your arms. Ah, what's this...."

"Don't touch me," Ninochka cried. "How dare you?" Trembling, she seized her waist and hastily pulled it on.

"Why are you offended? I have yet to find grounds—"

"You are impudent," Ninochka broke in and left his house, slamming the door.

On the street she soliloquized. "Why did I go to a lawyer?" I should have gone to a doctor. Yes, that's what I'll do."

Dr. Dubiago was a dignified, elderly man. He became warmly interested in Ninochka, heard out her story, sniffed at her employer and at the counsellor-at-law, and said: "Take off your things."

Ninochka took off her waist, but the doctor rubbed his hands in the manner common to his profession, and said, "You'll have to take off all your clothes."

"All of them? What for?" Ninochka flared up. "He hurt my arm, and I'll show it to you."

The doctor, gazing at her milky white shoulders, made a sweeping gesture. "Just the same, you'll have to undress.... I must subject you to a retrospective examination. Permit me to help you."

He bent over Ninochka peering at her

near-sightedly, but in another moment, with one movement of her hand, Ninochka swept the glasses off his nose, depriving him, for a time, of the ability to throw retrospective glances.

"My God, what scoundrels all men are...."

She stood outside his office, thrilled with indignant wrath. "These men pretend to be the friends of mankind.... Intelligent human beings.... No; this shall not go on, I shall uncover these pharisees with their masks of necessity...."

And so she went to Thunderer, a journalist who enjoyed great popularity and was famed as an honest and unbribeable man who detected and disclosed iniquity from two to three times a week.

The journalist met Ninochka with no especial show of cordiality but, having heard her tale, was touched by her misadventures.

"Ha-ha..." he laughed bitterly. "These men are the ones who are called to heal the wounds of mankind, to ease the agonies of suffering creatures.... The defenders of the oppressed—whose motto is Justice.... Men who drop their veil of culture at the first encounter with Life.... Savages, even now conquered by Flesh.... Ha-ha!My friends, I recognize you all...."

"Shall I take off my waist?" Ninochka shyly asked.

"Your waist? What for? Oh, wellperhaps you'd better. It may be interesting to see these results of widespread culture.... Hm...."

Upon seeing the nude arm and shoulder of Ninochka, Thunderer blinked

and shook his head. "Well . . . What arms . . . For the good of Mankind you should be forbidden to reveal them. Take them away. However—wait a minute. . . . Ah, that fragrance. . . . What if I should kiss this arm, here in this little curve? Hey? Hm . . . you will agree that you cannot be harmed by that; and I shall receive a new, a wonderful sensation which—"

She dressed and went out.

On the way home she smiled through her tears. "God, what villains all men are—what fools. . . ."

That evening Ninochka sat at home and wept. Then, because she was tempted to share her woes with someone, she changed her dress and went to visit her next door neighbor, a student by the name of Ignemonov, who specialized in science.

Ignemonov fussed with his books day and night and could always be found with his pale, handsome face bent attentively over the printed page.

When she entered the room he lifted his head, ran his fingers through his wavy hair and said: "To Ninochka—greetings! If she wishes tea, she will find it there. And meanwhile Ignemonov will finish this chapter."

"I was insulted today, Ignemonov," Ninochka mournfully informed him, seating herself opposite him.

"Is that possible? By whom?"

"A lawyer and a doctor, and another old man. . . . such villains . . ."

"How did they insult you?"

"Oh, one made my arm black and blue, and the others looked at it and were very annoying."

"That's too bad," said Ignemonov, turning a page.

"My arm aches a good deal," Ninochka pursued pitifully.

"My, my, what rascals. . . . Drink your tea."

"Perhaps"—Ninochka wanly smiled—"Perhaps you'll also want to see the arm, like the others. . . ."

"Why should I?" The student smiled at her. "You say there is a bruise—well, I believe you."

Ninochka began to drink the tea. Ignemonov turned the leaves of the book.

"It still pains," she complained. "Perhaps I ought to apply something?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"Shall I show you the arm? I know . . . you aren't like the others. . . . I trust you."

Ignemonov shrugged his shoulders. "Why inconvenience yourself? I am not a medical student and cannot help you. . . ."

Ninochka bit her lip and, rising, stubbornly said: "But you'll look just the same. . . .?"

"Oh, very well. Let's see your arm. Don't trouble yourself . . . just let the waist down from the shoulder that hurts . . . so . . . Is this it? Why, what a bruise! A real black and blue mark, all right. But it will heal soon." Ignemonov nodded his head in sympathy and returned to the table.

Ninochka sat silent, with bent head, her naked shoulder dully gleaming by the light of the frugal lamp.

"You ought to put your waist on," Ignemonov advised. "It's deucedly cold here."

Ninochka's heart contracted. "He pinched my leg below the knee, too," she ventured after a slight pause.

"The blackguard!" returned the student with a commiserating nod.

"Shall I show you that?" Ninochka was about to lift her skirt, when the student said affably: "But what for? You'll have to take off your stocking and only catch a cold in this draught. Honestly, I don't know what you'd call 'beans' in doctoring. Drink your tea."

He plunged into his reading. Ninochka sat a while longer. sighed and shook her

head. "Well, I guess I'll go. I'm only disturbing you."

"Why not at all, not at all," said Ignemonov, energetically shaking her hand in farewell.

And upon entering her room, Ninochka sat down on her bed and, with downcast eyes, once more repeated:

"What scoundrels men are! . . ."

An Old Man's Walk

By HAZEL HALL

His slow feet feel along the street.

Upon a quest beyond his scope,
And one he has forgot, his feet
Must blindly grope.

His hands have given up and weigh,
Disillusioned, on a cane,
Scarred with the old desires that they
Snatched at in vain.

The question of his eye has stilled,
Though yet unanswered; his wet gaze
Is stagnant with the unfulfilled
Dreams of other days.

And yet the quest of life concerns
His tread; with effort vague and thinned
As a drift of smoke that turns
A little while before the wind—

He moves along a darkened rim,
Like a fissure yawning in the street,
While the life that has eluded him
Still tempts his feet.

Poets of the Tropics

By MUNA LEE

TWENTY countries with twenty distinct literatures, potential or potent, and in each of the twenty hardly an adult who has not achieved the publication of his poems: that is one phase of the literary situation in Latin America. Consequently, to "know" Latin-American poetry *in toto* is impossible. Particularly is the acquisition of first-hand literary knowledge difficult for the foreigner. A book of really original and exquisite verse may be struck off a press in Managua or Cuzco and remain practically unnoticed even in its own country—the foreigner may perhaps never hear of it, much less see it. Naturally he turns for information to anthologies—a dubious source in any language—of which there are some scores in Latin America dealing with contemporary poetry.

The most widely circulated of these are the "Parnasos" printed by the Barcelona publishers, Maucci, whose plan of anthologizing every country in turn is at last nearly completion; the various compilations varying greatly in excellence. The procedure has been usually to select an anthologist and leave to his judgment methods of selection and arrangement. As a result we have the Cuban anthology—long out of date—in which each poet is represented by one poem only; the Nicaraguan anthology, chiefly memorable as a gallery of

lamentable portraits; and the two latest additions to the series, the "Parnaso Portorriqueño" and the "Parnaso Colombiano," representing the poets of Porto Rico and of Colombia respectively.

The "Parnaso Portorriqueño" is interesting but rather haphazard—badly indexed, and neither alphabetical, chronological, nor topical in arrangement—though there is a rough division into older and contemporary poets; a distinction whose arbitrary character is evidenced by the fact that José de J. Esteves, who died four years ago in his early thirties, because of the mere fact of his death is placed among the older poets, and Cayetano Coll y Toste, a revered septuagenarian of the old school of Castilian letters, whose poems in form and feeling belong to another century, is included among the contemporaries.

As an anthology, the book suffers greatly from the fact that the compiler—hitherto unknown, and, as he naively apologizes in the preface, "writing far from his native land, out of touch with living poets and with libraries containing the work of the dead"—has evidently a fixed, sentimental ideal of poetry which precludes his judicious selection of work showing that vigorous modernistic tendency at work among the younger Porto Ricans. As an informative record of Porto Rican poetry from its beginning in the early nineteenth century to the present, it is most interesting; though as Bolívar Pagán,

reviewing the book more in answer than in sorrow, quotes of the poets included,

Not all who are are there,
Not all who are there are.

Porto Rican poetry, as distinguished from Spanish poetry written in Porto Rico, is generally considered to have begun with Alejandrina Benítez, born in 1819, who wrote voluminously and agreeably of the native landscape. Her son, José Gautier Benítez, is the island's favorite and most spontaneous lyric poet, and there is a tropical luxuriance of imagery and the music of tropical guitars in his best-known poem, the hymn to Porto Rico,

An enchanted garden flinging
Dominion over the waters afar,
An urn of flowers swinging
Between pearls and perfumes, coral and
spar.

Another favorite of the earlier period is Santiago Vidarte, whose very real gift for song was just beginning to reach its full expression when he died in 1851 in his twentieth year.

Strange as we may find the fact, in Latin America, poetry is a means of political advancement (had we been Latin-America, poetry is a means of elected John Hay to the presidency!) so that it is not surprising to find that José de Diego, a picturesque figure who spent his life traveling throughout the Spanish world seeking support for his project of an Antillean Republic, to consist of Cuba, Porto Rico, and Santo Domingo, is represented by a number of lyrics. Moreover, the present Congressman from Porto Rico, Felix Córdova Dávila, the only member of the present Congress, I believe, who has read an original sonnet on the floor of the

House, contributes to the anthology two sonnets, one a most uncongressional treatment of a bather "of jasmine and rose."

The greatest name in Porto Rican poetry so far is that of Luis Llorens Torres, represented here by the rhythms, like the rhythms of the tropical sea, of his "Song of the Antilles," and by the "Creole Rhapsody", which celebrates Porto Rico as lyrically as Gautier Benítez's hymn and more passionately, as well as by two of the symphonic sonnets. The symphonic sonnet on Bolívar—upon whom there are two or three poems in every Spanish-American anthology—is noteworthy in this instance for having attained originality in a well-worn subject:

Poet, hero, soldier, statesman, he stands,
Great like the countries whose freedom
he won;
He whom no country can claim as her
son,
Though as his daughters were born
many lands . . .
.....
Each land that he freed,
Was a soldier's poem and a poet's deed
—And he was crucified!

For the other, the younger Porto Ricans, who are bringing a distinctive note into their island's literature, one will have to consult other sources. Their existence the present anthologist in many cases ignores, probably in the Spanish sense of the word as well as the English. There is no satisfactory collection of this newer and more vivid work as yet, work touched not only by poetic appreciation of beauty, but by a sense of the pity and irony of life; but some of it may be found in the "Antología de Poetas Jóvenes de Puerto Rico", the Anthology of Young Porto Ricans, compiled several years ago by Evaristo

Chevremont and Jose S. Alegría, both of them poets, one Modernistic and the other conservative, and hence bringing a balanced judgment to bear upon the movement of which they have intimate personal knowledge.

The Colombian "Parnaso" is a much more successful compilation than the Porto Rican. Its perusal gives one a feeling of acquaintance with the great valleys, the great rivers, the gloomy Andean heights of this most Roman Catholic and most Spanish of the Southern Republics. There are in the Colombian character, reticence, severity, integrity: qualities which make themselves felt in the poetry.

José Asunción Silva (1860-1896), greatest of Colombian poets and one of the leaders of the Modernistic movement which has exerted such widespread influence over contemporary Spanish poetry, was the translator and admirer of Edgar Allan Poe, whose ideals of art he put into practice in much of his own work. Among the poems in the present collection are his beautiful "Nocturne", whose effect of moonlight and shadow is lost when translated, and "A Poem", which expresses lyrically and compactly Silva's theory of poetry, and Poe's, practically in its entirety:

I chose among subjects grotesque and
tragic.
Calling all rhythms to me with conjury
magical;
And the headstrong rhythms came troop-
ing together,
Joining in the shadows, seeking, fleeing
each other.
Powerful rhythms or grave or sonorous,
Some like arms clashing, some like birds
in a chorus.
Champing their golden bits under har-
ness fragile

Crossed over the tercets, those chargers
agile.
And opening his path through that
gathering horde,
In purple and gold strode the sonnet the
Lord.

Furthermore, says Silva, he chose rhymes "of silver and of crystal" to tell his story "of a beautiful woman, idolized and dead", "with a music as of mandolins accompanying a shroud."

Silva's tragic life—his many reverses, the legend of his romantic love for his sister, his suicide—has inspired directly many poems in Colombian literature; the best-known of them, Guillermo Valencia's "Reading Silva", creating in its turn the atmosphere of "The Raven": the room made familiar by Poe, with its books, its marbles, its dark and glowing velvet draperies, is there; but in this case the protagonist is a woman, and the mournful Alexandrines have the sonorousness and deepening passion to which the Spanish language so lends itself. Valencia is represented also by interesting extracts from his "Anarchs", a poem of a very different type, dealing sympathetically and with a kind of angry energy with the lives of the socially oppressed.

Rafael Pombo (1833-1912), whose work is touched with melancholy and pervaded by his sense of the transience of life is interesting to North Americans because much of his poetry was written in New York while he was a legation secretary and deals with his life here—his visit to Niagara (always a favorite subject with Spanish poets); the sudden death of Elvira Tracy, a young girl with whom he had been at mass, and about whom he wrote a lovely and touching elegy; etc. He was one of the many Latin-American poets to

write English verse, his poems having been printed in various North American periodicals.

The hatred of the bourgeois attitude of indifference, stupidity, or mere every-dailiness, to which various poems in the anthology recur is expressed ironically by Ricardo Nieto in his quatrains on the modern Sancho Panza:

How changed you are, how elegant,
Sancho!
Who could look on you and voice a reproach!
Saddle leather you have exchanged for
kid gauntlets,
Forgetting your nag, you travel in
coach.

Among the younger contemporaries we find a keener and more analytical attitude than that of the older men, and a more objective method. The poetry of Colombia is now, as formerly, spontaneously lyrical, but the poets have added to the possible choice of subjects. Love, filial feeling, jealousy, death, and the Falls of Tequendama are not sup-

planted; but Luis C. López, to instance one of an increasing group, finds material for his sonets not only among the traditional themes, but in the village barber-shop and the mayor's office. If these younger poets are at times guilty of extravagance of phrase, it is the unpruned luxuriance of abundant vitality, and therefore a healthy sign.

And the anthologist has in this case exercised a fine discrimination; he may, as he says, have been forced to exclude much that is good, "since all Colombians are poets as all Hungarians are violinists", but one cannot well quarrel with his inclusions.

These poems have been written by men drunk with that wine which the barbarians do not drink. Says Jorge Mateus,

Let them pass, presumptuous lords of
common sense....
They come from a land whither you
could never go.
And like a hymn lifted up to the sky,
They bear blossoming branches of ideal
and of sorrow,
Your palaces to purify.

Three Slender Things

(*From the Irish Triads*)

By ADALINE KATZ

Three slender things there are that best support the world,
The slender stream of milk, from dug to shining pail,
The slender stalk of corn, green springing from the ground;
The slender skein of thread, in deftly moving hands.

Three slender things, but on these life depends,
The white swift fall of warm new milk,
The green of corn unripened, bespeaking gold to come,
And thread in nimble, ivory-like skilled hands.

Research

By GEORGE O'NEIL

I give you this:
A broad white sail
Bellying with the west wind's thrust,
Catching a curve of scarlet rust
From the low arc of sunken sun.

The dark horizon draws its ring
Sharper against the pallid sky
And three white sea-gulls
Wheel and cry,
Arching their wings and wavering.

And heaven is a dome washed pale,
Mistily blue,
With one bright nail and one bent golden wire
And one
Infinite tone of quiet spun. . . .

There is a wren's quick frightened sound
As Earth swings to the darkened turn.
And so I tell you:
Things are round;
And where the circle breaks
You yearn. . . .

The Hegira

By EDITH CHAPMAN

IN answer to her announcement that dinner was ready he came over to the table and sat down opposite her; she waited for him to speak but he didn't. She watched him fiddling with his food. He had a habit when preoccupied of eating nothing but his meat and letting the other things go.

She hated to meet his eyes. She knew she looked what he called "wild." She had been agonizingly worried, nervous all day and all the night before. And it was absurd. There was nothing to be worried about. She glanced hastily up and away again from the familiar sight of the dark wing of his hair flowing back from his forehead. She would always have that to think of she caught herself musing. She could never forget that way his hair had of furling back like a wing. She jerked out of her introspection.

"Did you get a lot done today? The light was rather bad, wasn't it?"

"No, I did very little and what I did do I scraped out again. It wasn't any good. . . . It had nothing to do with the light." His tone was brusque and irritable and it seemed to hold her responsible for the day's failure. She had heard the same note in it several times of late. He made it imperatively evident that he didn't want to talk.

She wished she wouldn't notice these things. She wished she wasn't always so intensely and obviously preoccupied

with what he wanted. He seemed to like much more, and actually to get along better with the people who took him as much for granted as he did them. And yet she couldn't stop herself from noticing things. Her noticing things and interpreting them was a habit that had been formed back in the dim years of her childhood. She could see the little lonely precocious figure of herself on some porch or playground, noticing and pondering, pondering. What did this or that gesture mean, a certain tone or expression? That was the way she had amused herself in those days, the way had compensated for her diffidence and isolating awkwardness. And the habit had stayed with her. She couldn't help observing the slightest variation in mood or inflection of the people round her. Even when the people were strangers to her. She remarked when a hanging foot was flexed rather than relaxed and speculated on what the tension signified. She studied faces and hands and postures wherever she found herself, as automatically as she breathed. She suffered sometimes from her lack of immunity to her environment. What did they matter to her, all these people who jostled against her and registered their appearances and mannerisms on her senses. What did they mean except an immeasurable fatigue and usually an aversion so intense as to be almost physical. As for the few who did mean much, she couldn't change them for all her tense noticing. She couldn't change

this tone of her husband's for example, nor cancel the irritation that had prompted it. "You are so hypersensitive," he was accustomed to tell her, and the statement had become of late a plaint.

She carried their meat plates into the kitchen and brought back the bowl of fruit which was their dessert. She also brought cigarettes and the last quarter of a bottle of Canadian whiskey which a friend had given them. John took his straight. She hated the stuff in any form but she usually sipped a little with him. He liked it better when she did.

He peeled an orange around and around, making of the peeling a long, singularly delicate spiral, and laid the whole fruit on her plate. Then he looked up with his twisted sharp smile. "Are'nt we to have any coffee?" he asked plaintively.

She had forgotten the coffee. These days, she was always forgetting something. She filled the percolator and brought it back to the table. She sat down, feeling that they had both done all they could to avoid something that had to be gone through with, and was still ahead of them. She ate her orange absently, her eyes fastened on a yellow drop that was traveling down her middle finger to the knuckle stained the same color from cigarettes. The fruit was delicious. It had been nice of John to peel it for her. She let her eyes lift to the greenish scarf he wore and then above it to his twisted unhappy mouth. "What is it?" she asked.

"What is what?" He was pouring out some of the whiskey. He seemed to have forgotten the coffee. He always forgot the things he had asked for

after he got them. He pushed the bottle her way. His long stained hands began working at a second orange spiral. His hands had always struck her as singularly ugly and expressive. They were the only sort he could have had. A painter's hands; dexterous, powerful, morbidly sensitive; always fussing and fumbling about; nosing about she would have said, softly as a cat does in a garbage can. She had never seen them quite clean nor decently quiet and out of sight. They were always pushing forward, confessing him. "What is on your mind?" she repeated. "You may as well tell me. What's the use of crippling another afternoon?"

He paid tribute to her acuteness with an appreciative flash of his dark, hostile eyes. The long swallow of whiskey he had taken had warmed him. "Telling you won't make any difference. I'll still be spoiling my afternoons; I'll be wasting them as long as I stay here. I've got to go away."

In spite of her exerted control she felt her face collapsing and her lips trembling like a little child's. "He hit her in the solar plexus." The phrase flashing absurdly through her mind made her want to laugh. She had heard it somewhere a long time ago. "Stay where?" she asked vaguely, fighting for time. "I'm not hurt," her tone tried to tell him. "I haven't fully grasped all you mean. You can still take it back if you want it, your threat to leave me. We can still go on as we are."

The thing in her he had never understood and which lately had irritated him more than anything else was just this combination of her almost clairvoyant subtlety and astuteness with a childish tendency to deny and shy away from the

most obvious facts. "I can't stay here," he insisted brutally. "Here in this place, here with you. I can't work here. I've got to go away."

The coffee had started boiling in the percolator. She heard it pounding and throbbing. With an automatic hand she reached out and pulled out the plug. "Why can't you?"

"Oh, God, Elsie, how do I know? All I know is I can't. Don't let us argue it and harangue about it. That won't alter anything."

"But one can't just accept it," she pleaded laboriously. "One wants to try at least to understand it. Your going will mean a great deal to me." She was trying to keep her voice cold and dispassionate; her sinister quiet at such crises often deceived him. "We've lived together a long time."

He nodded. "About eight years, haven't we? I didn't suppose I'd stick it that long with any woman."

"You haven't been unhappy, have you?" she urged.

He shook his head and took another swallow of the raw whiskey. The fingers of his free hand were rubbing against each other. "No."

"Then when did it begin? The change I mean? When did you start feeling like this?"

"Feeling like what?" His voice was savage with irritation. He squeezed the whiskey glass so tightly that he cracked it. "I don't feel any differently. . . . Elsie, don't punish us both with your questions. I can't tell you any more than I've told you. I tell you I'm going; that's all . . . If I didn't go I should commit murder. I should . . ." he broke off. "Oh, hell, what's the use?"

"What have I done?" she barely breathed. "Won't you tell me that?"

"You haven't done anything." There was a deep furrow between his eyes; his face was very pale; his lips were set. "You couldn't do anything. Nobody could. People have never really counted with me, never will count. Not even you, Elsie. I'd throw you all to the lions any time for just one God-directed stroke of the brush. Just to get one flesh tone true or the living pull of a tendon in the instep of the hanging foot that I was trying to paint today. And I couldn't get it. For the last few months I've been muffing it all the time. I'm ruining my work here. Do you understand that? Your love, your everlasting love and solicitude are stifling me. I want to get away from *you*." His strong, raucous voice sank back again and dwindled off.

Her face was a white blank out of which the eyes still delivered him her endless questions. "Won't you miss me any?" The tiny child's voice brought the words forward carefully so that none should be broken. "Am I always in your way? Aren't there times when you need me, when I can do you good?"

He sighed and almost yielded to an impulse to seize her hand, which he checked, however, knowing it would only make matters worse. "Elsie, I want to work. I want to work the entire day and sleep all night without a thought but that of getting up to another day of uninterrupted work. I don't want to have to think of getting back here for meals and seeing you and talking to you and kissing you, and all that. I don't want to have to consider a single soul. I want to go away. Let

me go. Don't try to keep me. It will be terrible for both of us."

Under the tirade of his words her questions had all died. Her eyes never left his pale, tense face, the violent whiteness and blackness of it, to which she had never accustomed herself. Some faint freckles lay scattered over the pal-lor, just below his eyes. She noticed the breadth of space between his eyes, the ugliness of his nose, the piercing beauty and cruelty and sweetness of his mouth. She let her eyes lift to his high forehead and above it to the black curve of hair. Suddenly his sheer physical being became unspeakably precious and desirable to her. She wanted him, now that she was about to lose him, as she had never wanted him in her life before. The next moment there rose in her a wave of such savage pain and rebellion against this separation that she thought she would scream out as a woman does in labor. But no sound came; only the convulsive quivering of her chin and lips, the almost cataleptic fixing of her eyes which grew larger and brighter with pain. "Where will you go?" she finally asked. "And when?"

"As soon as possible."

"How soon?"

The expression of her face was distressing and terribly distasteful to him. "There is no use in dragging this out for either of us. It's only torture. I wish you would just let me go."

Something forced her to smile. For a long time they sat without speaking. She tried to drink some of the black coffee that she had made, but it stuck in her throat; she couldn't make it go down. She set the cup back on the table. She couldn't see him any more;

there was a mist in front of her eyes. She didn't feel savage now, only weak all over. She gradually became aware of a question that had been urging itself for some time; a question she dreaded yet longed to have answered. She tried to voice it, but the column of tears in her throat prevented her. . . . She rose and began carrying the soiled dishes into the kitchen. He might divine the question and tell her himself what she wanted to know. But he didn't raise his head again. He sat smoking and brooding probably on the tendon that had gone wrong. . . . He was gone already. Suddenly she felt that she wanted him to go. As he had said, she couldn't keep him, like this. It was like having a corpse in the room. "Go when you like," she said quietly. "There is no use in dragging this out as you say."

"What will you do?"

He seemed to have thought of this side of it for the first time.

She stood leaning against the doorway and watching him. She could never refrain from watching him so long as he was near her. "I haven't gotten to that yet, but I shall manage. I always have managed. There were years you know of my life before you came."

"You'll never lack for money."

His painter's eye took in the line of her body where she stood; the slight, delicate body almost swaying with fatigue, crucified against the door. "Why don't you sit down? You look so tired."

She didn't move nor answer him, but continued to stand, going whiter and whiter. She felt his appraising eyes travelling up and down her, up and down. They lingered longest on her face. "How damnably expressive you

are," he told her. "How terribly morbidly expressive. Why don't you keep yourself to yourself? Why have you given yourself up this way, surrendered yourself to me? Why have you put your whole quivering nervous system into my hands? My poor girl, I wish I could give you what you want. I can't. I would if I could."

"I know it, John. Don't try any more. It's all right." The hoarse sound of her voice shocked them both.

Suddenly everything changed. He crossed the room and took her in his arms. She felt his lips all over her tired face. She hadn't the strength left even to kiss him. She wanted simply to stay in his arms as long as she could; to feel his body all around her, covering her. She wanted to creep inside him and become a part of him. But she knew this would never be. It never had been; not really. She had never been able for a single moment to fill all the space of his consciousness. There had always been in the way of it those brush strokes that would or wouldn't come right. Even now while she relaxed against him, she felt his arms loosening, his kisses growing weaker. He was forgetting her again. . . . She clenched her hands on his sleeves. That wasn't right; he mustn't forget her, not this once. She raised her head to his, crushed her lips against his and then after a bitter abortive moment held off from him. She could get more from just looking after all.

He looked back at her gravely. Again he noticed how wan she was and weakened by her effort to control her grief. "You must lie down." He lifted her in his arms and carried her over to the couch. Then he sat down on the edge

of it beside her. "You mustn't suffer so," and he passed his muscular hand back and forth over her hands. "It isn't that I don't love you. I've never loved any woman but you. I didn't think I could ever love any woman as I have loved you."

She smiled. He was always so vapid when he suspended even for a moment his natural brutal honesty. "Don't bother," she said, and then more softly—for it was the question she had forborne to ask all the last hour:—"Shall you ever come back?"

Instantly he stood up. He had become himself again. "I can't answer that. I don't know the answer myself. . . . I don't think so. Don't wait for me or expect me." He strolled to the bookcase and picked up his cap.

She sat up. "Where are you going?"

"I'm going out to walk a bit. You'd better go to bed."

He didn't deceive her. She heard him fumbling about in the hall for the big bag which easily held all the things he ever kept at home. His other few properties were at his studio. The front door opened. "Goodnight," he called.

"Good night."

The door closed. She sat listening and waiting. . . . Waiting for what? She could give over waiting for a while. There was nothing to wait for now. Not yet. She dared not begin yet to wait for that day months distant, probably years distant when he might come back. . . . She wondered if he would write to her. He would have to write her something when he sent her the money. A line or two at least. That might not be for two or three weeks. Two or three weeks before she would even hear from him or know where he was. Perhaps longer.

She became suddenly conscious of her wrist watch, ticking. She pressed it against her ear and listened to its clear, regular beat. The vivid thought came to her that her life, any life was noth-

ing in the last analysis but a trickling of minutes. She wondered how many of them it took to make two weeks, three weeks. . . . She had always been poor at arithmetic.

Stranger

By ALLEN TATE

This is the village where the funeral
Stilted its dusty march over deep ruts
Up the hillside covered with queen's lace
To the patch of weeds known finally to all.

Of her virtues large tongues were loud
As I, a stranger, trudged the streets
Gay with huckstering: loud whispers from a few
Sly wags who squeezed a humor from the shroud.

For this was death.
I should never see these men again
And yet, like the swiftness of remembered evil—
An issue for conscience, say—
The cold heart of death was beating in my brain:
A new figuration of an old phenomenon.

This is the village where women walk the streets
Selling eggs, breasts ungathered, hands like rawhide;
Of their virtues the symbol can be washtubs
But when they die it is a time of singing,

And then the symbol changes with change of place.
Let the wags wag as the pall-bearers climb the hill.
Let a new slab look off into the sunset:
The night drops down with sullen grace.

The Bed of Caesar

(*A Dramatic Fantasy*)

By JAMES B. CLUNY

The scene is the room in the tavern on the right bank of the Rubicon in which Caesar is alleged to have slept the night before the crossing. In the bed in which Caesar is alleged to have slept are discovered DIODORUS CANTHRAX and EUSEBIUS SCAURUS, both very wide awake. Day is breaking.

EUSEBIUS

The devil take me if I have slept a wink.

DIODORUS

I must confess this is a denouement I had not expected.

EUSEBIUS

To think that we came all the way from Cairo through storms at sea and on donkeys in Italy so as to be able to say we had slept in Caesar's bed! I told every rascal I knew in the city what pleasant dreams I should have.

DIODORUS

It is awkward, certainly, but I somehow simply could not quiet myself into slumber.

EUSEBIUS

The thought of the honor it was to be sleeping in Caesar's bed kept me from sleeping.

DIODORUS

I was, as a matter of fact, so obsessed with importance that I might as well have sat up.

EUSEBIUS

Now we can never tell anybody, I sup-

pose, that we slept in a bed after Caesar.

DIODORUS

Don't be an ass. If anybody asks us, we slept like pigs.

EUSEBIUS

Very well. We may as well lie out of it, I suppose. But it is a very bitter draught to be drinking, to know you cannot sleep on a quiet night in a tavern when Caesar, with the world awaiting him at sun-up over the river, slept like a boy on the most eventful eve in history.

There is a sound like a rustling of feathers and the WRAITH of CAESAR appears in the grey half-light before them.

THE WRAITH OF CAESAR

If you want the truth of the matter, you two ridiculous dotards, I was myself so damnably excited the night I spent in this inn, what with thinking of Pompey and the fickleness of the legions, that devil-a-wink I got.

DIODORUS AND EUSEBIUS

The gods be praised!

THE WRAITH OF CAESAR

Devil-a-wink, I tell you, and the same is true of them all that are said to have slept in four-posters the night before battles and triumphs. Such libels on grandeur would draw Herakles out of the shades to deny them. When you return through Rome and to Cairo, I charge you to tell them the truth as I told you—"The night before crossing the Rubicon, it was never a wink he got".

*The WRAITH OF CAESAR vanishes
with a swishing sound.*

EUSEBIUS

I had scarcely suspected that.

DIODORUS

Nor I. And yet I am not at all sure
that we ought to tell what he told us.

EUSEBIUS

I, neither. We came here to sleep in

Caesar's bed and that is what they expect of us.

DIODORUS

You are quite right. If anybody asks us, we slept like cadavers. That is a compact.

EUSEBIUS

It is a compact.

*They get out of bed and begin putting
on their sandals.*

On the Road To Wockensutter

By JOHN CROWE RANSOM

"Sahara doth not keep her livid hell
Wholly unto herself," writes Herodote;
"Sirocco scourgeth even the greenlands well,
The pulver of her brimstone itched my throat."

Brady had little Latin and less Greek,
Not his to verify the obscure quotation,
But Brady knew, no waterfall nor creek
Nor arctic tremor stayed his oxidation.

By sixty fiery miles they call a trail
Red Hole communicates with Wockensutter.
Here Brady, who had started on a rail,
Pursued his march diminishing like butter.

For Brady had deployed the Manifold
Beneath the sacred Principle of Venus;
But desert ladies named him greasy and old,
And the impanelled peers pronounced him heinous.

"She is a verity, else all is nit,"
Cried Brady, his faith quivering with outrage,
And saw the yellow-feathered pert peewit
Who flashed upon the acrid sea of sage.

Noon of the second day made its ascension,
The Brady marched emblistered at the goal,
And to the peewit made offensive mention
Of words that scored the tablets of his soul.

"A simple shotgun with a choke were best,"
 Says Brady, looking for a place to sit,
 But as long eluded of Burd Helen's breast,
 He adds, "Could any human engine hit!

"For you again are Venus, I suppose.
 I have your evidence of shape and feather,
 And no man more impatient ever rose
 To see you turn to nothing altogether.

"And though I had a miracle of salt
 To sprinkle on your saucy tilt of tail,
 I think I'd rather loose you in default
 Than catch another mere obscene female."

Garret

By MARIAN NEVIN FUNK

Under their leaning roof
 Always night came in
 With a low secret whirr
 Of wings aloof;
 Nightlong, without rest,
 Something tapped at the roof
 When her unquiet hands
 Were quiet on his breast.

Easy enough to say:
Bats build under the eaves,
On the roof fall
The yellow leaves.

The Modern Novel

By A. DONALD DOUGLAS

THE world which every true novelist inhabits is that of human experience wherein all men must live. To interpret that world without prejudice and fear the novelist must bring to his understanding of life an almost intolerable burden of sensitive comprehension. He must live a thousand lives other than his own. He must so enter in upon the common experience of mankind that he can set forth truly and beautifully in the written word all those infinite and perplexing adventures the soul makes among the physical appearances of this world. Always he is most truly himself by being his characters. His personal philosophies, his private convictions, his favorite tobacco, his favorite wife: these are of no consequence. No man can invent anything that has not been previously invented by life; and therefore the novelist seeks not invention, but imagination. And by imagination is meant the reflection of life in all its many-hued and glittering appearances through a temperament that refuses to shock, to excite, to astonish, even to attract the reader save by an exquisite and all-seeing enclosure of the men and women of life against the vast terrible indifference of Nature.

Perhaps no man has done more to blind the public to the real desire of fiction, perhaps no man is to be held more to count for the popular idea that the novel must amuse and instruct than that indefatigable vaudevillian, Charles Dickens. That he was a great and good

man no one cares to deny; but that he turned the novel into a Punch and Judy show before the infantile raptures of his immense childish audience is credit more to his humanity than to his understanding of the mysterious and impenetrable force of life. In Dickens you find only "characters," not character: it is a kind of continuous twenty-five cent performance in which Barkis is always willin', Mrs. Micawber will never desert Mr. Micawber, in which each personage spouts his neat little foolish saying by whose funniness he may be recognized. Like the numbers stencilled on the jerseyed backs of football warriors, you can't tell the players without them. The novels of Dickens are a continuous bleating about life, impossible young men and bloodless women, Paul Dombey asking what the Wild Waves are saying, Little Nell maundering about the next world, Florence Dombey weeping over the faults of her parents, analyzing her feelings with a subtlety beyond comparison. Doras and Agneses and Estellas, women without a semblance of reality, marrying men that they may reform them, having no adventurous impulses, none of the ravening compulsions of sex, nothing but an incredible and cultivated odor of decaying goodness.

No less than Dickens may Thackeray be brought to judgment for his deliberate ugliness and his delicate sentimentality. The master of style, the idol of professors, the adored of our mothers and fathers: what has Thackeray done

to merit the reverence of our modern world, what has Thackeray to teach our young men and women? Thackeray pretending to satirise an epoch, and yet remaining the typical club-man, standing before the fire in an attitude of moral loftiness, preaching and moralizing and bullying in a tired, cynical voice, weeping crocodile tears over "good" women for whom like all club-men at heart he had the most thorough contempt, admiring mean things meanly, grudging the very existence of young love. One of those nasty cynical old men who make a jest of the dreams of youth, one of those sentimental pedants whose only understanding of the love of man for woman is the discreditable knowledge that some day romance must die.

Here are the morals of Thackeray: Have your little love affair. What can it matter? It will be all the same a hundred years from now. Today she is lovely and young, with the winds of dawn upon her cheeks, the fire of a pure love in her eyes, all the trusting nobleness of womanhood in her heart. Ah, well! In ten years she will be fat and drab, she will scold when you come home late, she will wear shabby clothes and forget to wash in the morning. There will be the usual brood of dirty children; you and she will mew at each other like old cats over stale meat; you will come to learn that the birds are tiresome and foolish, that they sing the same old songs, that you can not make money out of the dawn, or wring any splendor from the hurrying and mysterious dusk. Woman are frail creatures. They obey their queer impulses, they trust us; and after all, what are we, my dear sir, what are we? Pre-

tences, moral lepers. So long as we have our wine and our women, we shall rest content. Love is for a day: it will not even have left its tattered cloak of dreams. All the songs have been sung; all the dreams have been dreamed. In time you will find that she buys her complexion at the durg store, and she will find (quite without surprise or anger) that you have your little affairs.

There is the beauty and nobility of Thackeray. There is the pity and comprehension of human life that the Victorian novel brings to our generation. It is not too early to say that Dickens and Thackeray have fallen into the dust of the discredited years; and we turn gladly to the noble company of artists who have never been afraid to sing the praise and the hate of life and to portray that beauty burning at the core of truth.

The modern novel is nothing more than the disinterested and dispassionate endeavor to interpret that strange and terrible thing, the soul of man, against the burning hues of a tremendous universe. And therefore for those readers afraid before life the novels of Conrad, Hardy, Wassermann, and Dostoevski must always prove hard swallowing; and for those readers who wish to be reassured with lying promises of universal happiness the modern novel will forever remain a monument to an unflinching and unforgiveable honesty of intention. The modern novel has tried to set forth truth (even where truth is an illusion) in terms of beauty; but the beauty of the horror-haunted world of Dostoevski is not the gilded prettiness of "The Idylls of the King"; and to interpret life truly the novelist can omit very little. Much of it is wasteful, much

horrible, much despairing; but the honest interpretation of life is there. Not all the frightened clamor of the male old women who sit in arm-chairs and write books on sweetness and light can quell the man who can say, Lo, there *is* life, represented without fear, without prejudice perhaps hardly with decency; but always with courage and compassion and a love so fierce that it purifies where most it devours. A generation fed on the scrupulous purity of Tennyson and the schoolboy optimism of Browning in truth can hardly be asked to understand "Jude the Obscure," "The World's Illusion" and "The Idiot".

Life is not a flame to be shunned, but a sword to be grasped; and though the interpretation of life is a hard matter rending to the soul, we are bound that we shall know life, know it without any flinching, know it though it slay us. And that can only be done by penetrating deeper and deeper into the twilight of the human heart, the very dungeons of the human soul, all the thousand separate hells of life. We of this generation have read the lives of the saints; we have read the devil and all his works; and in both tablets we have found the dark pages of life scrabbled over by the clownish characters of idiocy. Before and through the War and after we have found the time-dishonored lies and have resolved that the decision shall be placed within our own hands for judgment.

All young men and women begin by taking for granted the reality of the appearances under whose various forms humanity passes most visibly in work and play. And even after the War many remain so happy that they stop to leave for a moment the pageantry of life and see how much of it is real. More than

any other the modern novelist has ventured to represent the illusory hinterlands behind the multitudinous turbulence and stir of life. Life may be no more than a pageantry of gorgeous shadows passing by, and we who stand on the curbstone and watch the brave gestures can only hope that some small parcel of those intrepid dreams may come to pass. If action be so real and if thought be only the portion of fools, is it not fair to ask, and especially in the sinister light of the War, whether action is indeed justified of its results? It has reared the pyramids, and has wrought Gothic cathedrals and suspension bridges. But much more than this, action has wrought war and knaveries and corruptions, intolerance and bigotry and greed. If history could be gathered into some expression of its meaning (as it has been gathered in the novels of Dostoevski) would it not take form in one long-drawn cry of intolerable anguish?

At last to the modern novelist there has come this knowledge that we move within a world of hurrying ghosts. We are all bound within prison houses of our own consciousness from whose confinement there is no escaping; and we all stand on impassable ledges shouting vain words across the separating gulfs. For to more of us and more there has come this knowledge that behind all the turbulence and fury of life, behind the antics of fools and the parade of warriors and kings, behind the noise and clamor of men stabbing each other in the dark and knowing not why they stab, of loves that pass into disillusion and ambition that turns to ashes in the mouth; behind this show of shadows there lurks only the intense and awful

quietude of the heart of life, tearless and unmoved, smiling and implacable, until the crack of doom.

Like a quiet merciful spider the modern novelist (who is also the true historian) sits in the center of the web and watches with an infinite heartbreak the poor foolish flies that struggle so bravely for the stale meat or that buzz in the mortuary sunlight. Yet he does not think that virtue consists alone in this quiet contemplation of life, this deliberate withdrawal from the idle dream of action. No, the modern novelist lives within the shelter of his own soul, and yet, too, plays his part in the busy pageantry, at once actor, showman, and spectator, like Dostoevski in the slums or Wassermann wandering lonely and battered through a dozen cities in as many years.

The modern novelist admits that life

may be a vulgar and empty show, and its rewards hardly worth the anguish we put into our most ordinary tasks. But also he believes that all the songs have not been sung, that all the loves have not yet been brought to flower, and that compassion is yet ours if we would seek her in the filth and splendor of life. Life is a duel to the death which no man of honor will refuse; and if the heart of things be cold and tearless and gray there is none the less the world of men and women with wounded souls for understanding. In the world presented by the modern novel we are all adrift on the waste gray tumbled waters of life, we can only hope that the dawn will come at the end of our long night, and while we are yet together there are the stars, quiet, far-distant and cold, yet alone making tolerable the night of our great darkness.

Into The Sunset

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

For ten miles we traveled into the sunset
Under the barbaric palms
That clashed their fronds from side to side
Dripping light.
In their shadows I saw the figures of Nubian kings
Swart and shining, with necklaces of bones
And on the hills I heard the bray of their trumpets. . . .

Wave by wave at last the tide of light drew back into the darkness
And the rising wind swept clouds and stars into our faces
Like leaves whirling in dust.

“Hands” and Hired Girls

By JULIAN KILMAN

THAT evening I had loafed about the front of the farm house, enjoying the spectacle of a land rich with the bounties of nature. To the right lay an expanse of fresh-cut wheat, the up-standing shocks etching themselves in the light of the harvest moon like rows of sentinels. A wood, dense and black, was close at hand, and in the stillness, broken only by the rural music of the cricket, one easily peopled it in imagination with lurking redskins and dreamed of Chingagook.

Huffman, the “hand” who could leap into the air and crack his heels thrice, joined me when it was late and time for turning in. Young, barrel-chested and tireless as he was, I had observed him perform prodigies of labor in the fields that day. He was a red man and the odor of sweat was still with him.

I noticed the shotgun he carried.

“Where are you going?” I asked

“Coon hunting,” said he. “Want to come?”

Along the white ribbon of a road we progressed in the dust while Huffman discoursed on the raccoon and his habits. It seemed that ripening corn and moonlight nights made the occasion propitious; also that the pelts had a definite value in the market. Before a farmhouse down the road half a mile Huffman whistled with his fingers. A figure left the shadows surrounding the building and slouched toward us. Ahead of him, barking and leaping, ran a dog of the terrier type. Ed, the newcomer,

was a tall, rangy, young man. His employer had “loaned” him that same day to help Huffman in the fields. At a gruff word from him, the dog dropped obediently behind and fell silent.

We left the road and started across the fields. After a time we came to the corn which stood high on the stock. The dog dashed forward. An hour’s coursing brought no luck, and, weary with walking, I stole a glance at my watch. It was after one A. M. and it seemed that these farm laborers, due soon for another day of man-killing work, must desist. I was about to voice a suggestion that we return when the dog gave fresh cry. As I ran, breathless, to keep pace, I caught the flash of one of the small animals whose hide we sought so relentlessly. It had darted aside and I nearly stepped on it. My first impulse was to kick it; my next to help it escape. But the dog found us out. With a snarling growl he leaped at the raccoon, and the animal’s fight for life began.

In excitement I found myself dancing about helplessly. What chance had a raccoon against the sharp teeth of that devilish canine? Huffman and his companion rushed up, both shouting, roused as I had not seen them before. With the skill of long practice, Ed caught the dog, turned him over to me, and helped Huffman maneuver the raccoon into a bag. To my fingers, the tensed, trembling muscles of the terrier felt like steel. I hung on, wondering whether we were in for more hunting. So it

seemed, for the two men started off briskly. Presently we emerged from the field and were in the roadway once more. I heard my companions sniggering.

"Probably at my expense," I reflected grimly. "Well, I'll show them that I can stick it out as long as they."

"How far have we come, Huffman?" I asked, trying to keep my breathing normal.

"Oh, about four miles," he said. "Gettin' tired?"

"I'm doing very well," I said, shortly.

We came to a farm house standing close to the highway, one of the finest I had observed in the particular vicinage. Ed muzzled the dog, while Huffman passed through the front gate. There was something cautious in his gait.

"What is he after?" I asked, with lowered voice.

Ed, peering intently after his companion, did not respond, and it came home to me sharply that while I was with these bucolic roisterers and they were friendly enough, I was distinctly not of them.

Then Ed gripped my arm and hurried me off down the road. Here, to my surprise, I saw Huffman helping two girls climb the fence. They made much to-do over the performance and all were laughing immoderately.

"Hello, Ed," cried one.

Full bosomed and lusty, she stood in the near-daylight of the moon. One hand went to her hair. Ed grabbed her about the waist and a prolonged struggle ensued. The girl had extraordinary strength for again and again she succeeded in thrusting away the powerful man trying to kiss her. I witnessed Ed's expression: his jaw was set, his

look savage. Huffman and the other girl remained on the "snake" fence, laughing and calling to the combatants. Finally the girl in Ed's arms succumbed and he kissed her resoundingly.

"There, damn ye!" he cried, throwing her roughly from him.

She lay prone on the ground. Huffman started toward her, evidently intending to pick her up. But she bounded swiftly to her feet, and with torn waist and disheveled hair, confronted Ed angrily.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she sobbed. "Before a stranger!"

The other girl joined me and peered into my face.

"What's your name?" she demanded.

"I'm a friend of Huffman's," I replied.

Without the slightest warning, she reached out and tweaked my nose. The pinch brought tears to my eyes.

"If you're like him," she laughed, "you won't stand that."

My attempt to catch her was futile. She scaled the fence and went into the orchard. Huffman shouted and was after her.

"I'll fix you," he cried.

The girl ran with the speed of a deer. Her white dress flashed and zigzagged among the trees, with Huffman in hot chase.

From back of me there sounded a laugh and I saw Ed with his arms encircling his recent antagonist. The two were crossing the road.

Feeling *de trop*, I strolled the road for a time, and had about determined to start back myself when I heard the four of them. They were moving along the highway, still baiting one another, pushing and scuffling. Huffman whispered

in his companion's ear. She came over and, placing her arms about my neck, kissed me with parted lips.

"That's nicer," she giggled, and fled toward the house whither the other girl had preceded her.

"Yes," I called. "That's nicer."

Ed released the terrier, which he had tied to the fence, and catching up the bag with the raccoon, started on. If I had expected any discussion of the events of the night I was to be disappointed as Huffman and I followed and mile after mile passed in silence. The moon, suspended low over the horizon, huge and golden, seemed oddly out of position. In the east there appeared the faint light of approaching dawn. Night was done. We arrived at the farm where Ed was employed, and with a "So long," he left us.

Huffman now lugged the bag containing the raccoon. When we reached the house, he said with a grin:

"I calculate you'll want some sleep."

"I'm tired," I admitted. "How about you?"

"What'd I sleep for? I'm goin' to skin this here coon and then it'll be time to milk the cows."

At eleven o'clock that morning I arose and went out to the barn where the clatter of the threshing machine proclaimed that the work was going forward. Here my two companions of the night, Huffman, red and freckled, with strong, white, regular teeth and magnificent physique, and Ed, sullen-looking, lean and wiry, were both stripped to the waist, and busy with the great machine. From time to time one of them, without the slightest apparent relevance that I could see, would shout: "Take it away!"

The heat, the dust, the noise were insupportable, and I moved off. I observed the coon skin. It had been neatly trimmed and tacked by its four legs onto the side of the barn.

Crucifixion!

Hamlet

By RICHARD KIRK

I am Hamlet to these things
Of petals and of wings;
Poor tragic Hamlet, quite absurd
To any butterfly or bird;
Pale-faced Hamlet with a dead leaf,
Clutched to his side, he calls his grief.

The Caravan

By ELIZABETH J. COATSWORTH

"I AM a poet and I am young. The Tartar blood of my mother runs warmly through my veins and I am tired of worshipping at the tombs of my father and of my grandfather and of my great grandfather and of my forbears before him. And I do not wish to lie on that propitious slope and from my grave look out over these hills which today fatigue me with their unchangingness, nor hear the shrill voices of the daughters of these women whose scolding and laughing along the roads today offends me. I shall sell my patrimony and with it I shall buy a tall black horse with a mane like a black cascade over the smoothness of his shoulders and a tail touching the ground like a waterfall. I shall buy also an embroidered purse and in it put the money that is left to me and hang it on my girdle, and carry a flute of bamboo and a drinking cup at my saddle bow and wherever I go the eyes of the people will follow me, and long afterward the girls will look at the print of my tall black horse in the road and their sleeves will be wet with the dew of their tears. But I shall go on, over the mountains, where the shadows fall from the palaces of the clouds, among strange people, to the waste lands. And I shall wander across the plains with the sun hot like the eye of an angry dragon, and the road will be a long endless stretch of dust, reaching across the earth as at night the road of stars reaches across the sky. And my heart will be unquiet in the long empty spaces, and I shall dream of the old wanderers who rode their horses across it, as I now ride mine, and it will be many hours before I have gathered in the dusk enough twigs and straw to light my evening fire, and groom my tall dusty horse beside it until he shines like black lacquer outlined in red. And one day I shall see what I have been waiting for, far, far off, a cloud of dust and from it the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle and the neighing of horses, and as I shall approach, these sounds will grow louder and louder and blend into a wild pastoral music, and I shall tremble in my saddle. And then from the midst of the bodies and horns and manes moving through the light of the dust, I shall see the caravan of the Kirghiz, wandering as the ancestors of my mother wandered, and the men will be riding on ponies and the women will be riding on bulls with tall white turbans on their heads, and in the center of all will go the brides mounted on fine horses covered with tassels, and the most beautiful will ride first, dressed in bright silks like an empress, and she will be singing a song whose words she will weave from her dreams among the smoke of the caravan's moving: 'I am young' she will sing, 'and gold like the heart of a rose. The flocks

close me around, and the quick-footed mares and the cattle whose horns are like tossing moons in the sky. I have curtains of dust before me, and my people ride on either hand. And at night I lie sometimes in the shadows of old ruins, where feeble women once sat sighing over their looms of cassia wood. But I am a wanderer, and all the plains are the garden of my tent, and the herds are the walls of my city.'

Then if she looks up, and sees the great horse shining in front of her, and the young man whose eyes upon her are two black flames, and thinks 'He is a stranger, he is beautiful,' it will be well with me that I have sold my patrimony, and left these stagnant villages and the tombs of so many generations to meet that look through the dust of the caravan's passing."

Lunatic

By MARJORIE ALLEN SEIFFERT

My heart's a gypsy or a lunatic,
It knows no thrifty laws,
It longs to scatter riches and to pick
Gold out of straws.

To burn the amber harvest summer sent
With sparks of laughter,
Not bed therewith the cattle of content
The winter after.

In June to whistle tunes with every note
The blackbird knows,
Since in November fields my empty coat
May flap at crows.

Preserve forbidden fruits, hoard on a shelf
Their purple jelly,
Comfort with flavors of my summer self
My winter belly!

Since virtue and old age are hard to trick
With any gift,
This is the wisdom of the lunatic,
And gypsy thrift!

Reviews

TRAMPING ON LIFE

An Autobiographical Narrative

By HARRY KEMP

(Boni & Liveright, 1922)

WITH surprising lack of humor, Mr. Kemp has written a story of his life that kept one reader at least sitting up at night. I began the book with serious misgivings, felt convinced after two pages that Mr. Kemp could not write good prose, and was sorry that he had written this narrative. Then I discovered myself devouring the volume with sincere enjoyment.

It is a difficult work to appraise. There is no question that Mr. Kemp does *not* write finished or urbane prose. His book is almost entirely without the salt of humor, though there are funny events recorded. And yet he has produced a volume of reminiscences that are thoroughly pleasing. "Tramping on Life" falls in the honorable category of documents. It is packed with incident, character-sketches and self-analysis. It is a mine of fact and personal history. It surpasses most novels in interest. And although one cannot recommend it as a work of art in letters, one can conscientiously urge all lovers of books to read it. It is a rare example of autobiography.

Harry Kemp, who has for a long while been considered by his own preference as "The Tramp Poet", tells in this story of John Gregory's life the essential facts of his own. Doubtless there is some embroidering, but one feels that the work is largely fact.

Names, of course, are changed, many well known figures in literature and politics appearing in the story. The tale of Harry Kemp's adventures as hobo, stowaway, college student, cabin boy, poet, are related at great length—the book is large octavo, 438 pages. And on every page one finds notations on life—direct transcriptions of character and scene—that make it immensely well worth reading. Those who have found pleasure in the monumental diaries of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, will find the same sort of recreation—much diluted, however—in "Tramping on Life." Where Blunt was everything, the complete English gentleman as well as poet, politician, horse-breeder, and God knows what, Harry Kemp is merely the very self-centered young poet, treasuring his inevitable Keats, storming the world for poetic adventure. Yet his keen eye appraised men in all situations in which he encountered them, and he has transferred his impressions to paper most entertainingly. He writes baldly, sometimes awkwardly, but to the point. He has congealed a tremendous amount of human life between the covers of his book.

The autobiographical narrative is unusual in its frankness and it is to be hoped other writers of memoirs will model on this simple directness. Sometimes Mr. Kemp seems to fabricate clouds of glory round himself in an uncomplimentary situation, but generally he paints his weaknesses with as much sincerity as his virtues. He tells many

things that a less dogged recorder would omit. He cannot be accused of attempting to varnish his character. Which is what most of us would do very meticulously.

The ambition of Harry Kemp to be a great poet and win the applause of the world is the thread which runs through the story. It was his aim, a passionate aim, to be one of the Great Dead.

The strangest aspect of the autobiography is the lack of humor. Mr. Kemp is said to have said "the soul knows no such things as a sense of humor". This statement may be true of the souls of Mr. Kemp, Savonarola, Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha. One doubts whether it is applicable to the souls of Voltaire, Laurence Sterne, Rabelais, and—among Mr. Kemp's contemporaries—Mr. Robinson and Mr. Cabell.

Mr. Kemp tells many things with a very straight face which strike one as uproariously funny. One wonders whether Mr. Kemp knows they are funny. But, all apparent faults aside, including the too deadly sobriety, "Tramping on Life" is one of the richest books in substance that has been printed this year, and one of America's most interesting autobiographies.

PHILIP ZORN.

BABBITT

By SINCLAIR LEWIS

(Harcourt Brace & Co., 1922)

MANY readers felt that Sinclair Lewis was unjust to the small town in his famous "Main Street." Seemingly to prove his fairness, in his new book "Babbitt" he satirizes the gods of the large town. It does not make

much difference. What this young Yalensian is attempting is to laugh up-to-dateness out of existence. Or, as he himself expressed it in the foreword to "Main Street": "Main Street is the climax of existence. That this Ford car might stand in front of the Bon Ton Store, Hannibal invaded Rome and Erasmus wrote in Oxford cloisters." The heirs of New England and the Old South ought to chuckle over Lewis' relentless goadings of what William James called the "bitch-goddess success." Yet this remark should lead no one to class Sinclair Lewis as a traditionalist. His own particular milieu is, I believe, Greenwich Village. "Babbitt" places the author as easily the greatest satirist in the history of American literature. He has done to *Saturday-Evening-Post* America what Samuel Butler did to Victorian England.

"Babbitt" is the story of a realtor (*sic*) who lost faith in business as the *primum mobile* and did not know what to do about it. Only two years of his life are portrayed, those from age forty-six to age forty-eight. He is first seen on his model sleeping porch rising from the night's troubled slumber. He is last seen just after the wedding of his son Ted, fresh from college. In the meantime, he had, of course, made several deals in real estate and houses, had suffered horribly from indigestion, had quarrelled incessantly with the various members of his family, had been elected vice-president of the Boosters Club, had taken a vacation in Maine, had "carried on" rather clumsily with a pretty manicurist and others, and had attempted to become a liberal in politics and economics, but was thwarted by the group mind. The pages narrating the

last episode constitute the best part of the book. Lewis' comprehension of the psychology of our various social strata is indeed remarkable. This and his excellent power of linguistic mimicry give him distinction as a writer. Chapter fourteen is a conspicuous illustration of the latter quality. The two events that brought Babbitt back to the straight and narrow path were the attempt on the part of his best friend, Paul Riesling, to shoot his own wife and the operation for appendicitis undergone by Mrs. Babbitt. I said straight and narrow path; but Lewis is too keen a determinist to let the phrase get by—he insists that his tergiversation was merely good business.

For non-conformists there is many a laugh in the book. "You know my business isn't distributing roofing—it's principally keeping my competitors from distributing roofing," says one of the boosters whose business it was to "peddle" tar-roofing. "There was no court to decide whether the second son of a Pierce Arrow limousine should go in to dinner before the first son of a Buick roadster, but of their respective social importance there was no doubt; and where Babbitt as a boy had aspired to the presidency, his son Ted aspired to a twin-six and an established position in the motored gentry." Here at last is a novelist that seems to have sat at the feet of Thorstein Veblen. "They fell joyfully into shop talk, the purest and most rapturous form of conversation," comments the author on the conversation of the boosters as they rode to their convention.

The art of describing vividly contemporary and ubiquitous scenes is Lewis' forte. I have never talked to one who

had read "Main Street" who did not inquire: "Do you remember where he describes that slow train in Minnesota?" In "Babbitt" the description of George M. Babbitt taking a shampoo is equally good. "Babbitt's best thrill was in the shampoo. The barber made his hair creamy with thick soap, then (as Babbitt bent over the bowl, muffled in towels) drenched it with hot water which prickled along his scalp, and at last ran the water ice-cold. At the shock, the sudden burning cold on his skull, Babbitt's heart thumped, his chest heaved, and his spine was an electric wire. It was a sensation which broke the monotony of life. He looked grandly about the shop as he sat up. The barber obsequiously rubbed his wet hair and bound it in a towel as in a turban so that Babbitt resembled a plump pink calf on an ingenious and adjustable throne."

Professor Stuart P. Sherman is right in saying that "Sinclair Lewis is conspiring with the spirit of the times to become the most important and interesting novelist in America." The reason is that he knows the meaning of the word excellence, and is not afraid to champion it. Nil disputandum de gustibus is not a part of his philosophy. The fact that he dedicates "Babbitt" to Edith Wharton is significant. The aristocracy of excellence seems about to reassert itself. Lewis also seems to know that there are thrills in life besides the sex thrill, altho he is overfond of photographing the latter.

Margaret Fuller said once that she accepted the universe. When Carlyle was told this, he ejaculated: "My God, she had better!" Sinclair Lewis evidently does not accept contemporary

American civilization. And if "Babbitt" has the vogue that "Main Street" had—and let us hope that it will—will there be anyone to say that he had better?

WILLIAM THOMAS.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IRONY

"Introducing Irony"

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM

(Boni & Liveright, 1922)

"GENIUS", a great poet has said, "is the introduction of a new element into the universe." The new element may be a method as well as a content, and in fact, is usually the former. In method, Bodenheim, too, makes his entry—introducing irony, his element.

But what is irony? What is the relation of irony to the rest of the world order? To make Bodenheim intelligible and to show the plausibility of his method, it is perhaps necessary to explain the genesis of the element—irony.

First, in life, comes innocence and faith. Then the self emerges and our inherited orthodoxy is impaled upon the altar of a new god. But in a little while the acquired deity turns out to be as impotent as the old, and so skepticism is born and the negation of all gods. The human mind, however, which is fecund of new beliefs, soon finds itself slipping back to a new faith or to the renascence of an old one. Man seeks a determining principle in the shifting order of things. Then perhaps comes wisdom, which endeavors to see the whole of life from a single viewpoint—as an emanation and direction of one power, working through a multiplicity of agents, toward one end.

But wisdom approaches the absolute mind and is really impossible. Only the mind that sees space and time and all the manifestations of life as one whole,

can truly be said to be wise. In lieu of it, therefore, to man, comes irony, which, too, is a cosmic view of things. It sees the pathos and the bathos of our existence as one, the humorous tale of of our self-pity—and the tragedy of our defeat—as the expression of a single consciousness, of a single power. The infinite beats upon the tympanum of our brain and stirs us to think of the objective nature about us. The brain makes an effort and a new element is born into the world—thought, but thought must have a subjective agent to apprehend it. If we are too sophisticated for faith, too anxious for some positive end to adapt skepticism, too weak intellectually to embrace wisdom, we may yet accept the substitute for wisdom—irony.

In his poem "Seaweed from Mars", Bodenheim narrates a story of cosmic irony. "Torban, a young man from Mars" visits our planet and finds a strange disharmony in our existence. He discovers our eternal dualism of form and spirit and notes that though we have attained a certain technique of life, we have no content for it, so that our myriad gestures signify and avail nothing. He sees our world divided, too, into man and nature, whereas in Mars, as he knows it, the universe seems whole. There is a harmony between all the elements that exist on his world and life moves or rests in perfect rhythm there.

In "Turmoil In a Morgue" Bodenheim draws another picture of irony. He represents the babel of man, the struggle between the beast and the soul of man, the dissonance of our passion, the unattainment of an inner harmony by man.

And in his poem "An Acrobat, a Violinist, and a Chambermaid Celebrate," the poet, ruminating on the "geometry of souls", notes with irony the perversions man wishes to perpetrate upon the objective world. He notes how man would introduce into nature habits of his own that would disturb the serene placidity of nature, that would make it yield to his laughter, his cry and his irony. The poet says:

Men will tell you that an arm
Rising to the sky
Indicates strident emotion,

and

That the arm is a solid tunnel
For a significance that shoots beyond it.

But it is the ignorance of men and not their wisdom that permits them to think thus, for upon the decoration made by

Angles of arms and straight lines of
bodies.
The violinist's music

falls, and the

. . . .vague embellishment of flesh
is "erased".

It is quite true, of course, that in man's emotions, "the concealed mathematics of the soul" may be found, but man's "debris of words" will not buy him "a liquid release." Man knows neither the "content" nor the "outline". He knows his defeat and to preserve himself somehow, he invents irony for support.

Bodenheim's style is original. He is a psychologist as well as a poet and his style alters with his theme. In everything he writes his individuality is, of course, present, but it is a different phase of his self each time. Now it is lyrical and soft; now it is realistic and

harsh. At times, it suggests the vagueness of sound and light and movement present in some ephemeral mood, but then, again, it strike a discord of hard masses. On occasion it moves with a subtle, enfolding movement, as if with the treacherous tentacles of irony, it would suck in its prey, and then it opens up again and flows into an abandon where it is free to follow any rhythm it may strike.

Thus, Bodenheim is alternately romanticist, symbolist and realist. He unites all these into a method of his own. A man reading his "Emotional Monologue" with its stark, almost matter-of-fact realism, would never suspect the lyric sweep of some of the lines in "Seaweed from Mars", or the quiet dignity of some of his sonnets.

Bodenheim compares his wife's voice to Schönberg or to the music of Schönberg, as we must say in prose. The analogy could be used with reference to Bodenheim himself. He, too, is an intellectualist like the composer. He has something of Schönberg's frigidity and hardness of technique, though he has on the whole a great deal more warmth than the German musician. Like Schönberg, too, he is an artist for the few rather than for the many. Nevertheless, a good deal of his work should be quite intelligible to the average reader of poetry who is not mentally indolent. Bodenheim is a young writer and we cannot predict his development. We cannot tell whether he will write with greater simplicity or with greater complexity in the future. There can be no question, however, about the fact that he is one of the significant poets of contemporary America.

S. P. RUDENS.

GARGOYLES

By BEN HECHT

(Boni & Liveright, 1922)

PERHAPS to the average optimistic critic of the national letters, the appearance of "Gargoyles" will be only another feather in our cap to be stuck in our head-dress alongside "Babbitt," "Cytherea" and others. To me a natural-born sceptic, it is the white bird that flies seldom and alone.

In this book Hecht often reminds me of Sherwood Anderson, at least, the Sherwood Anderson of "Winesburg;" sometimes of Arnold Bennett (in the chapter describing the funeral of William Gilchrist, for example), occasionally he suggests Cabell; but rarely the Ben Hecht of "Erik Dorn". This last fact alone should make "Gargoyles" worth a reading.

As the title implies this is a study of contorted souls, twisted grotesquely out of shape by the current taboos and prohibitions and indeed by current affirmations and ideals. The setting is a large city, any large American city. The characters are George Basine, his sisters, his mother, their friends, lovers, husbands and hangers on. We are introduced to George Basine, aged twenty-six, one early Sunday morning in May, 1900, when he and a comrade are emerging from a bawdy house. Basine has that quality which Mr. Mencken says is prerequisite to worldly success. He has a superior manner, which he achieves by immediately banishing from his consciousness those traits that lower him in his own esteem.

There are introduced in rapid succession the other characters who are assembled at the Basine home on this par-

ticular Sunday. Mrs. Basine, who has recovered interest in life since the demise of her husband some few years before the novel opens; George's sister, Fanny, the average, sensible girl whose "mental life was one endless debauch"; his younger sister, Doris, whom the other members of the family respected because she was incurious and tactiturn; Judge Smith, immaculate in starched linen and overawingly dignified and deliberate, who owed his dignity and deliberation to frequent alcoholic debauches which impaired the quickness of his processes; his daughter, Henrietta, "whose body was as undisturbed by desire as her mind was by thought." Then there are William Gilchrist, successful furniture dealer, whose real life was spent with the heroes of history, swashbucklers, pirates and Napoleons; his wife, "a dreadnought of social life," and their son, Aubrey, author of best sellers, novels impeccably moral, owing their popularity to their romantic heroes with whom a half-million women readers had imaginary affairs every night; and heroines whom another half-million men ravished in their dreams." Into this respectable gathering is introduced a poet, Lief Lindstrum, certainly intended for Carl Sandburg, a singer of the masses which he deifies and regards somehow mystically different from "the pack", his comment to Doris on her family and their associates.

Some years later we see the unravelment of these characters. Mr. Hecht is, I should say, a Calvinist. What happens is fated. All these people seem predestined. Basine, by his gallant posturing, traps himself into a marriage with Henrietta, towards whom he feels

no attraction whatever; and is bored by her to the point where he lies awake by her side imagining her funeral in details. Yet he never admits to himself his discontent. His stupid home-life instead of driving him into illicit affairs with other women (note the sureness of Mr. Hecht's characterization) confirms him in his urge to make a figure in the world of politics. He becomes the moral uplifter, the champion of the sanctity of the home, making a virtue of his mismating. He carries the voters before him, is elected Judge, and later United States Senator. Finally, he does fall in love with Ruth, his secretary. Yet he finds himself bound by his own moralizing, by the image of himself he has created and never allows his affairs with Ruth to progress further than kisses behind locked doors. When Ruth defiantly allows herself to be seduced by a professional Don Juan, Basine's elaborately constructed ego crumbles before the eyes of the real Basine. He sees himself for one terrible second as he really is. But to live with this vision is impossible. Basine partially recovers, during the war, by venting his fury on the Germans, crying death and destruction on these fiends, these seducers of women, these moral gorillas. So we leave him, the husk, the gargoyle victorious.

The warm-blooded Fanny marries Aubrey, her temperamental opposite. The author turned advertising man, dreams of writing a great novel, a scathing novel. After his father's death he discovers a manuscript left by the elder Gilchrist, Rabelaisian tales cast in medieval setting. Aubrey contemplates publishing the book under his own name, but is compelled by the austere

moral figure he imagines himself to resist the impulse. His wife, Fanny, driven by her exuberant passion and her husband's ineptitude carries on an affair with another man. Though this is her only actual fall from grace in the book, we are certain that there will be more of these affairs.

Doris, the other sister, follows after her true inclination; she leaves home to become the mistress of Lindstrum, the poet, but Lindstrum finds more ecstasy in his poetical imaginings than with this real woman. Doris dramatizing this desertion of Lief into an infidelity in the arms of his mysical mob, conceives a savage and insane hatred of the masses. She urges her brother George on in his political career to prove to Lief the gullibility, the bestiality, the stupidity of the populace. Eventually in a magnificently dramatic scene she goes mad. She is ill of a fever. Lindstrum, after ten years, returns. Doris is lying in bed, the soldiers are marching through the city streets on their way to war. "Did you hear we were going to war, Lief?... George is a Senator," she added. "He's going to declare war, Lief—"

"She covered her face and her body shuddered. "The pack is going to war... Did you see their eyes shining in the street and their mouths gloating...?" Suddenly she throws herself at the window. "The window," she gasped, "look out and see!" Doris screamed, "The beast, the beast!"

These are the main currents of the book briefly outlined. They fail to show the fine skill and the restraint of Mr. Hecht, his undeviating truth to his characters and his unwillingness to make them write a moral. The style is

happily removed from his earlier kaleidoscopic manner. It is lucid and vigorous. Often he is clever, but never facetious or cheaply cynical. "Gargoyles" might easily have degenerated into a tirade. He presents instead a calm and terrible indictment, not of America, but of the mosaic of absurd taboos and half ideas which men call civilization and of which the United States is only a raucous example. But, perhaps, deeper still it is an inquiry into the whole meaning of life by a mind sophisticated, disillusioned and yet puzzled by the grotesque spillikins of mortal existence.

J. W. F.

CONTEMPORARY ONE-ACT PLAYS OF 1921

(*American*)

Edited by FRANK SHAY

(*Stewart Kidd Co., 1922*)

THIS volume contains twenty one-act plays by Americans. It is a companion volume to *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays*, edited by Messrs. Frank Shay and Pierre Loving.

In a foreword to the present anthology, Mr. Shay, after bewailing the unhappy lot of an anthologist, says: "In this collection I have ignored individual fame and have selected the best plays I could find." This is as it should be.

I confess, I have looked forward to the appearance of this anthology with considerable interest. While in New York last spring, I had occasion to call on Mr. Shay. Aware that he was engaged in selecting material for such an anthology, I left with him several one-act plays, none of which is included in the present volume.

Of the twenty plays included, I like

best "The Hero of Santa Maria," by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman and Ben Hecht, "Two Slatterns and a King," by Edna St. Vincent Millay; "Pearl of Dawn," by Holland Hudson; "Matinata," by Lawrence Lagner; "Thursday Evening," by Christopher Morley; "Forbidden Fruit" by George Jay Smith, and "The Dreamy Kid," by Eugene O'Neill—especially the first two.

"The Hero of Santa Maria" is a sardonic comedy. It contains admirably drawn characters and an ingenious situation.

Edwin Martin Fisher, or "Toady," has run away from home, taking with him fifty dollars, the property of his father, Nathan Fisher. After riding freights for several years and changing names with a young man in New York who subsequently enlists under the name of Edwin Martin Fisher for service on the Mexican Border, "Toady" returns to the home town; sees his Uncle Marty, who promises to effect a reconciliation (Nathan Fisher having declared that he will put his son behind bars if he ever sees him again), and, piloted by Marty, re-enters the family sitting-room at a time when father and mother are out. Shortly before their return he hides in Uncle Marty's room, intending to show himself at a favorable opportunity, should one occur. While Uncle Marty is endeavoring to pave the way to a return of the prodigal, "Squire" Hines, owner of the local newspaper and a prominent Democrat, comes in with an Associated Press dispatch announcing the heroic death of Edwin Martin Fisher on the Mexican border. The "Squire" proposes a public funeral, with testimonials and a brass band, intending to make a Democratic rally out

of the occasion. But Nathan Fisher has a grudge against the local Democrats. They have refused to aid him in his attempts fraudulently to obtain a Civil War pension. The "Squire" suggests an accommodation—if Nathan will allow the local Democrats to manage the funeral, the local Democrats will see to it that Nathan gets his pension. Nathan agrees. The "Squire" leaves for a consultation with his fellow chieftains, to return in short order. It is "Toady's" opportunity. He comes out of hiding and threatens to spill the beans unless he is given a slice of the pork. After considerable haggling "Toady" gets everything he demands and retires to his hiding place as the "Squire" returns at the head of the delegation with testimonials and the brass band.

The author extracts from the situation all the comedy there is in it.

Equally successful in its way, and in an entirely different genre, is Miss Mil-lay's slight, odd and very charming "Two Slatterns and a King"—a "moral interlude." It is written in nursery rhymes and the plot is similarly naive.

A King decides to wed and to wed the tidiest Maid in the Kingdom. He thinks to find her by dropping in of a morning when least expected. He drops in unexpectedly on Tidy, and finds her, by chance, filthy and with all the house-work undone. He then drops in unexpectedly on Slut, and finds her, by chance, tidy as to her person and with everything about her clean and orderly. He marries Slut and discovers, when it is too late, that Slut is the real Slattern and Tidy the chance Slattern of a morning. But it is impossible to convey an idea of the piece in outline; it is entirely a question of personal charm.

Of the plays in this volume I like least "Mirage," by George M. P. Baird—*Madam Butterfly* in a Hopi Indian set; "Sweet and Twenty," by Floyd Dell—the old, old story without a novel twist or a first-rate line in the telling; "Thompson's Luck," by Harry Greenwood Grover—a tragedy in which the denouement is brought about by the loss of a dollar bill; "The Conflict," by Clarice Vallette McCauley—a tragedy in which the denouement is brought about by taking the wrong train; and "Fata Decorum," by Carl W. Guske—a "poetic" play in very blank verse.

But these are only five out of twenty!

The other plays included in this volume are "Napoleon's Barber," by Arthur Caesar; "Goat Alley," by Ernest Howard Culbertson; "Tickless Time," by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook;; "All Gummed Up," by Harry Wagstaff Gribble; "Finders-Keepers," by George Kelly; "Solomon's Song," by Harry Kemp; "Jezebel," by Dorothy Stockbridge, and "Sir David Wears a Crown," by Stuart Walker.

On the whole, it is a volume that should be on the book-shelf of every little theatre.

LOUIS GILMORE.

AMERICAN POETRY, 1921

A MISCELLANY

(Harcourt Brace & Co., 1922)

AMERICAN POETRY" is a cocky title for a volume of verse by a self-appointed choir of thirteen American poets. This particular collection might be compared to an anthology of "Elizabethan Poetry" lacking contributions by William Shakespeare, John Webster and Thomas Dekker; for one fails to find in it any work by Edwin

Arlington Robinson, T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound. Maxwell Bodenheimer also is omitted. The writers whose work is presented as being America's poetry for the year 1922 are Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Amy Lowell, Vachel Lindsay, Edna St. Vincent Millay, John Gould Fletcher, James Oppenheim, H. D., Sara Teasdale, Alfred Kreymborg, Jean Starr Untermeyer, Louis Untermeyer, and Conrad Aiken. The volume is the second in a series which is designed as an American counterpart of the "Georgian Poetry" anthologies issued in England. The intention of the compilers, then, is supposedly to show overseas readers that the United States is as capable of producing poetry as the motherland.

Most of the poets represented in the anthology have written good verse at one time or another. Some of them have written excellent poetry. But the book which they give to the public as "American Poetry" is depressing. One feels that it is altogether too bad that such an ordinary exhibit should have been brought forward with such astounding terms. Compared with English verse of to-day, these documents fail to give us a case.

There is only one person who derives any glory from work in this anthology: H. D. Miss Millay derives honor. Robert Frost and Conrad Aiken hold their own.

A few of the poems are excellent, notably some of those by H. D. and Miss Millay. Others are good: "Fire and Ice" and "The Witch of Coos" (actually a short story) by Robert Frost, and some of the Conrad Aiken selections, which suffer, however, from recurring echoes.

Many of the poems are a species of half-and-half; they have merit and are pleasing in part, but by no means satisfying. One cannot—in comparing them with the English output—call them successful. Among them are "Lilacs," "Twenty-four Hokku on a Modern Theme," "In Excelsis," and "Vespers" by Amy Lowell; "A Brook in the City" and "Design" by Robert Frost; "And So Today," "Upstream," and "Windflower Leaf," by Carl Sandburg; "Twilight," "Full Moon," "Those Who Love," and "The Solitary," by Sara Teasdale; "Monolog from a Mattress," "Portrait of a Machine" by Louis Untermeyer; "A Rebel," "Prayers for Wind," "Impromptu," "Chinese Poet Among Barbarians" by John Gould Fletcher; and "Old Man," "Tone Picture" and "They Say——" by Jean Starr Untermeyer.

Compared with the traditional poetry of England and much that is being produced in England today, it must be admitted that many of these verses are wretched: notably, "The Swans," by Miss Lowell, "The Grindstone" by Robert Frost, "California City Landscape" by Carl Sandburg; "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed" and "I Know All This When Gipsy Fiddles Cry" by Vachel Lindsay; "Rain" and "Bubbles" by Alfred Kreymborg; "Winter Sun" and "The Crystal Gazer" by Sara Teasdale; "Roast Leviathan" by Louis Untermeyer; and "Snowy Mountains" by John Gould Fletcher.

Most of the others—aside from those of H. D., Miss Millay, and Conrad Aiken, to which I have referred—lulled me to slumber.

This collection is frankly imitative and frankly competitive. It is advanced

as a counterblast to the publicity of the English bards. If it were put forward merely as a group anthology, there could be no particular criticism brought against it because it contained too much poor or ordinary verse. Put forward as "American Poetry 1922," it is rather unfair to the democracy. If it was intended, as it seems to have been intended, as a bombshell in the heralded Anglo-American war of poets, it is a dud: England is safe.

J. M.

A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY

Edited by ROLFE HUMPHRIES

(*The Bookfellows*)

THE editor of "A Little Anthology" had a capital idea. He has started something that he or another can carry to satisfactory completion, but he has not made a satisfactory selection in this first collection. The book, very small and attractively printed, comprises more than fifty exceedingly short poems. It is the type of book that might be a treasure. As it is, it is merely a collection of magazine verse. I am not sure that fifty or more excellent short lyrics were printed in American magazines last year; but I am sure that many were printed which are better than most of the entries in Mr. Humphries' anthology. One is forced to believe that Mr. Humphries—as, in fact, he states in the preface—has made his selection without any more definite touchstone of excellence than emotional reaction. The result is that many of the poems are merely sentimental songs. Some are good. A few are excellent.

"While I Talked," by Oscar Williams, "A Request", by Lord Dunsany, and "Preference", by Vivian Yeiser Lara-

more are reprinted from *The Double Dealer*. *The Liberator* is represented by more poems than any other magazine, having a total of nine, mostly ordinary. Among the poets included are Theodore Maynard, Robert Frost, Elinor Wylie, Grace Hazard Conkling, John V. A. Weaver, Harold Vinal, Arturo Giovannitti, Margaret Widdemer Babette Deutsch, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Aline Kilmer, Amelia Josephine Burr, Sara Teasdale, Henry Bellamann, and Joseph Andrew Galahad.

I should like to quote "Tribute" by Aline Kilmer; "Sea Blue Eyes" and "Venetian Interior", by Elinor Wylie, and two of the *Double Dealer* poems, but I will quote only "The Hungry Heart", by Edna St. Vincent Millay, which appeared in *Vanity Fair*:

My heart being hungry feeds on food
The fat of heart despise,
Beauty where beauty never stood
And sweet where no sweet lies
I gather to my querulous need
Having a hungry heart to feed.

It may be when my heart is dull
Having attained its girth
I shall not find so beautiful
The meagre shapes of earth,
Nor linger in the rain to mark
The smell of tansy through the dark.

It is to be hoped Mr. Humphries will find a sufficient demand for the anthology to justify him in continuing to cull short lyrics from the magazines. This collection is pleasant. There are some poems in it which are memorable and a number which are enjoyable. Many of them one would like to re-read. Mr. Humphries has made a beginning for which he must be congratulated. The book is well worth having. And yet one hopes the next anthology will be more judiciously chosen.

STEWART JOHNSON.

Work

By EDGAR BOUTWELL

In the morning I am a lapidary,
Gleaning,
Among the shard of diluvial boulders
Of crystal,
Cutting them into many-angled gems.

At noon I cut diapered patterns
In satin-calendered parchment
To gauge them;

And by their many-prismed fires
Deep in the night,
I polish them,
Till they sift through the patterns
Without breaking.

Pensee

By VINCENT STARRETT

Great taverns for our wit were all too small
In those brave days of youth, remembered well.
Great were the stories that we used to tell,
Fired by strong cups. The stains upon the wall
Marked the hot crisis of some splendid brawl—
As when one claimed one's verses to excel
The rhymes of Dante at the gates of Hell,
Or flung a challenge to the good Saint Paul.

Great were the maxims writ in debtors' chalk,
While paradoxes glittered through the smoke.
Epigrams suckled at the breast of scorn
Crackled and mocked and slew. O brilliant talk!
Had we the wit to write the things we spoke
Few were the truths yet waiting to be born!

BOOKS RECEIVED

FROM MORN TO MIDNIGHT, An Expressionistic Drama, by Georg Kaiser, *Bretano's*, 1922.

PRELUDES AND SYMPHONIES, by John Gould Fletcher, *Houghton Mifflin*, 1922.

DOWN THE RIVER, by Roscoe W. Brink. *Henry Holt*, 1922.

STUDIES IN THE CHINESE DRAMA, by Kate Buss. With twenty-four full-page plates, edition limited to 1,000 numbered copies. *Four Seas Co*, 1922.

A CRITICAL FABLE, An Account of the Times, by a Poker of Run. *Houghton Mifflin*, 1922.

CORN, Moods from Mid-America, by Harold Norling Swanson, Grinnell, Iowa. *Malteaser Publishing Co.*

STAR POLLEN, by Power Dalton. (Series of First Volumes, Number Two) Chicago, Private Press of Will Ransom, 1922.

THE OLD HOUSE, A Novel, by Cecile Tormay, Translated from the Hungarian by E. Torday. *Robert McBride & Co.*, 1922.

THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING, A Novel of Africa, by Robert Keable. *E. P. Dutton & Co.*, 1922.

HEARTBEAT, by Stacy Aumonier. *Boni and Liveright*, 1922.

ATOLLS OF THE SUN, by Frederick O'Brien. *The Century Co.*, 1922.

TWO SHALL BE BORN, by Marie Conway Oemler. *The Century Co.*, 1922.

AN INTRODUCTION TO POETRY, by Jay B. Hubbell and John O. Beaty. *Macmillan*, 1922.

THE SUN CHASER, A Play in Four Acts, by Jeannette Marks. *Stewart Kidd*, Cincinnati, 1922.

THE BRIGHT SHAWL, by Joseph Hergesheimer. *Alfred A. Knopf*, 1922.

THE ENORMOUS ROOM, by E. E. Cummings. *Boni and Liveright*, 1922.

PREJUDICES, Third Series, by H. L. Mencken. *Alfred A. Knopf*, 1922.

BABEL, by John Cournos. *Boni and Liveright*, 1922.

THE MIRACLE, by E. Temple Thurston. *D. Appleton and Co.*, 1922.

THE BARCAROLE OF JAMES SMITH and Other Poems, by Herbert D. Gorman. *G P Putnam's Sons*, 1922.

REFLECTION, by Dr. Sigmund Freud. *Moffat Yard and Co.*, 1922.

STREETS AND SHADOWS, by Mercedes de Acosta. *Moffat Yard*, 1922.

POEMS, by Granville Lowther. *Moffat Yard*.

THE QUEST, by Pio Baroja. *Alfred A. Knopf*, 1922.

BRAZILIAN LITERATURE, by Isaac Goldberg, Ph.D. *Alfred A. Knopf*, 1922.

KNUT HAMSEN, by Hama Astrup Larsen. *Alfred A. Knopf*, 1922.

EL QUINTO LIBRO DE LAS CRONICAS, by E. Gomez Carillo, Madrid. *Mundo Latino*.

LA CIUDAD DE LOS OJOS BELLOS, by Dr. Cesar Juarros. *Mundo Latino*.

EL ESPEJO DEL DIABLO, by Jose Frances. *Mundo Latino*.

LO QUE SE POR MI (Confesiones del Siglo). Quinto Serie, by El Caballero Audaz. *Mundo Latino*.

CONFESIONES, by Paul Verlaine (Obras Completas, Volume VI) traduccion en prosa y verso de Pucho. *Mundo Latino*.

UN HOMBRE EXTRAÑO, novela, by El Caballero Audaz. *Mundo Latino*.

EL ALMA DE GALICIA, by E. Estevez Ortega. Prologue by El Caballero Audaz. Illustrations by Bujados, Castelao, Fresno, Jaime, Juan Luis, Muguruza, and others. *Mundo Latino*.

LA RUTA DE LOS CAUTIVOS by San German Ocana. *Mundo Latino*.